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SUBJECT: POLISH PM MARCINKIEWICZ SET TO WIN CONFIDENCE VOTE

1. (SBU) Summary: Polish Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz presented his government's program to parliament November 10, confident of prevailing in a vote of confidence later that day. Both the populist Self-Defense (SO) and the right-wing League of Polish Families (LPR) parties have given clear signals that they will join Marcinkiewicz's Law and Justice (PiS) in voting in the new government, providing the prime minister with a comfortable majority. PiS's would-be coalition partner, the centrist Civic Platform (PO), has declared that it will enter into firm opposition to the Marcinkiewicz government. Although winning today's confidence vote should ensure the PiS-led government's position, perhaps even for the full four-year term of office (once installed, the government can only be removed with majority support for an alternative), the Marcinkiewicz government faces the daunting prospect of relying on unpredictable and demanding partners -- for each and every vote -- to enact its ambitious reform program. End summary.

2. (SBU) In an hour-long address to the Polish parliament November 10, PM Marcinkiewicz outlined his government's program, which drew heavily on PiS anti-corruption, de-communization and pro-family themes. Marcinkiewicz named five principal tasks for his administration: reform of the state (establishment of the "Fourth Republic"); strengthening Polish security; strengthening families and effective social policy; implementation of economic policy based on social "solidarity"; and the development agriculture and rural areas. The Polish state is "broken," Marcinkiewicz asserted, and must be freed from the burden of postcommunism. He pledged that his government will return the state to the Polish people and eliminate what he referred to as the "Bermuda quadrangle" of destructive relationships among politicians, business, secret services and organized crime. Marcinkiewicz called for thorough reform of administration, which he insisted could be made leaner, more cost-effective and deliver more services (including support for families, small businesses and farmers) simultaneously.

3. (SBU) On foreign policy, Marcinkiewicz declared that Poland's strategic priorities and Euro-Atlantic commitments will not change, but that his government will work more effectively than its predecessors to strengthen Poland's position in the international arena. European integration is the guarantor of Polish development and prosperity, he noted, as Poland's alliance with the U.S. and membership in NATO serve as the guarantor of its security. Poland intends to play an important role in ensuring the health of the transatlantic relationship. Marcinkiewicz noted Poland's successes in Iraq and indicated that his government will consult with the U.S. and Iraq in the coming weeks to determine whether a Polish training mission will be needed. The prime minister pledged to promote democracy in Poland's eastern neighbors and to work to ensure a common EU energy policy that will serve Poland's interests.

4. (SBU) Marcinkiewicz began his presentation fairly assured of a victory in the confidence vote, having secured SO and LPR support the previous day. At a November 9 joint press appearance, SO leader Andrzej Lepper and LPR head Roman Giertych indicated that their parliamentary groups would likely vote for the government, providing PiS with a comfortable margin of victory even without the expected support of the Peasants Party (PSL). Lepper and Giertych indicated that they had not -- yet -- received any government positions for their support, but had secured a few key parliamentary committee chairs for their groups (including oversight of the special services for Giertych). Both signaled that they are prepared to support the Marcinkiewicz government over time, but highlighted that among their priorities will be expanded state support for families, farmers, and renegotiation of the EU accession treaty.

5. (U) Civic Platform leaders, meanwhile, declared that they would take the party into firm opposition to the PiS-led government and sought to dispel speculation that some PO members might support Marcinkiewicz. PO leader Tusk lamented the "sad coalition" that PiS had effectively forged with Self-Defense and LPR, which he further characterized as anti-European and unacceptable to PO.

6. (SBU) Comment: Although the new prime minister is widely

expected to win his confidence vote late November 10, his government will face significant challenges without stable coalition partners. The Polish Constitution's provisions mandating a "constructive" vote of no-confidence should ensure that PiS remains in control of the government, but the current political arrangement will require Marcinkiewicz to secure the support of SO and LPR for each and every vote, which is certain to come at a price. Working in PiS's favor, however, is the recognition by those opposition parties that they cannot set those prices so high that the government will be forced to return to coalition talks with PO.

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